

EVALUATION OF COMMERCIAL USE OF TURTLE EXCLUDER DEVICES (TEDs) IN THE GULF OF MEXICO AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

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The primary objective of the study was to determine the impact of TEDs on shrimp catch rates aboard commercial shrimp vessels operating in the U. S. Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic coast of the United States. Other objectives included assessing the effects of TEDs on the general performance of shrimp trawls and estimating impacts of TEDs on finfish bycatch. Field work for the project began in March 1988 and concluded in August 1990. Results from the first year of the study were reported at the Tenth Annual Workshop on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation. Results obtained from field work conducted during the August 1989 through August 1990 period were reported at this year's meeting.

During the second year of the study two TEDs underwent extensive testing: the Georgia TED equipped with an accelerator funnel and the Supershooter TED also equipped with an accelerator funnel. Discussion topics included seasons and geographic areas where data were collected, shrimp and fish CPUE (catch per unit effort) of TED-equipped versus standard nets, and turtle capture rates.